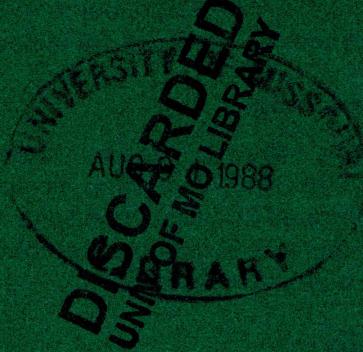


# Castlewood

## STATE PARK

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MISSOURI  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
Division of Parks and Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

## CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK

Castlewood, one of Missouri's premier recreation and resort areas during the early 1900s, has been revived as Castlewood State Park. From 1915 until about 1940, St. Louisans by the thousands flocked to the Castlewood area for weekends of canoeing, dancing, and sunning on Lincoln Beach along the south bank of the Meramec River. During the area's heyday, it was not uncommon for urban trains to deposit up to 10,000 weekend resort goers at three small depots located at the foot of the Meramec River bluffs.

A grand staircase, which still exists, guided the fun-seekers to the three resort hotels and numerous summer cabins once located in the area now being preserved as a state park. One of the first piped water systems outside the city of St. Louis supplied water to the hotels and cabins. An old water pump, used to force water from wells along the river to a cistern atop the bluffs, still stands in the park. While daytime activities centered on canoeing, swimming, and "indoor ball," now called softball, the evenings were filled with dancing on a huge, open-air dance floor.

Initially formed by two separate land acquisitions, Castlewood State Park now encompasses 1,778 acres straddling both sides of the Meramec River. The 550-acre portion north of the river is under development. Both of the original acquisitions were made possible by sizable donations from the St. Louis Open Space Foundation, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of open space in the St. Louis area. Castlewood is one of more than 70 state parks and historic sites operated by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Division of Parks and Historic Preservation.

### Meramec River Recreation Area

Castlewood State Park is part of the Meramec River Recreation Area, which stretches 108 river miles from Meramec State Park to the river's confluence with the Mississippi River

Photo by Dickson Stauffer



Meramec River bluffs

south of St. Louis. The recreation area will include a series of existing and proposed open spaces along the Meramec River that will be connected by trails. Protective easements are to be used to preserve the scenery along the river while allowing farming and other compatible uses. The Meramec River Recreation Area represents a unique cooperative venture by federal, state, local, and private entities to protect a major river corridor near a large metropolitan area.

### WHAT TO SEE

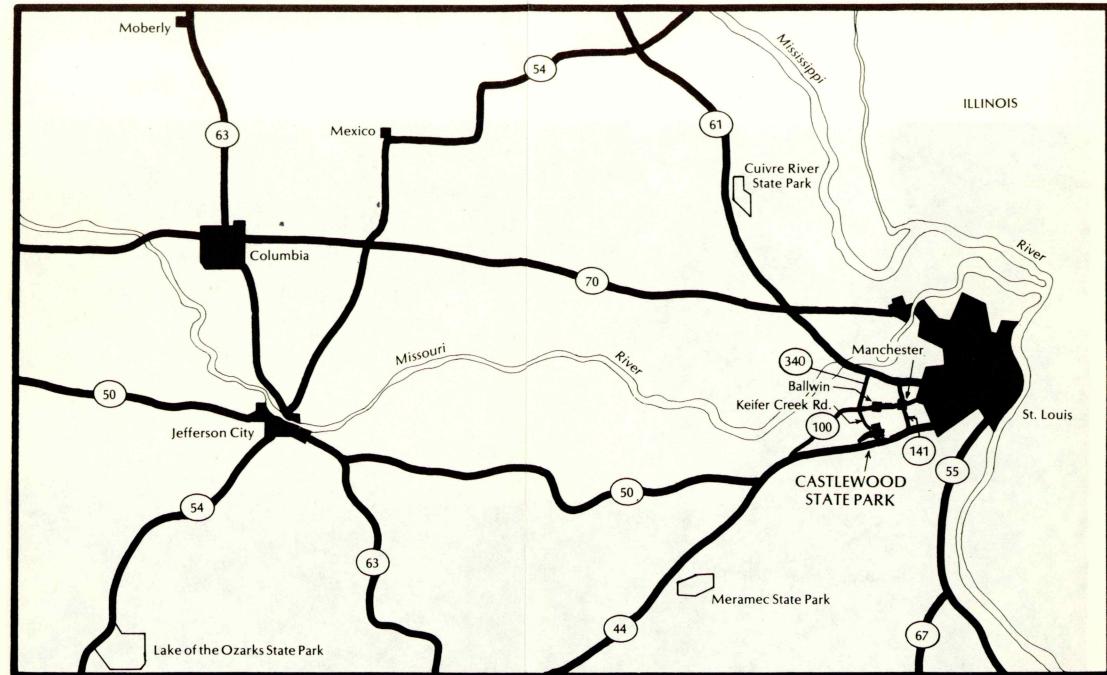
#### Natural Environment

An integral part of Castlewood's past is the majestic white limestone bluffs that tower above the Meramec. Although the origin of the name "Castlewood" may have been lost to history, the stately wooded bluffs are

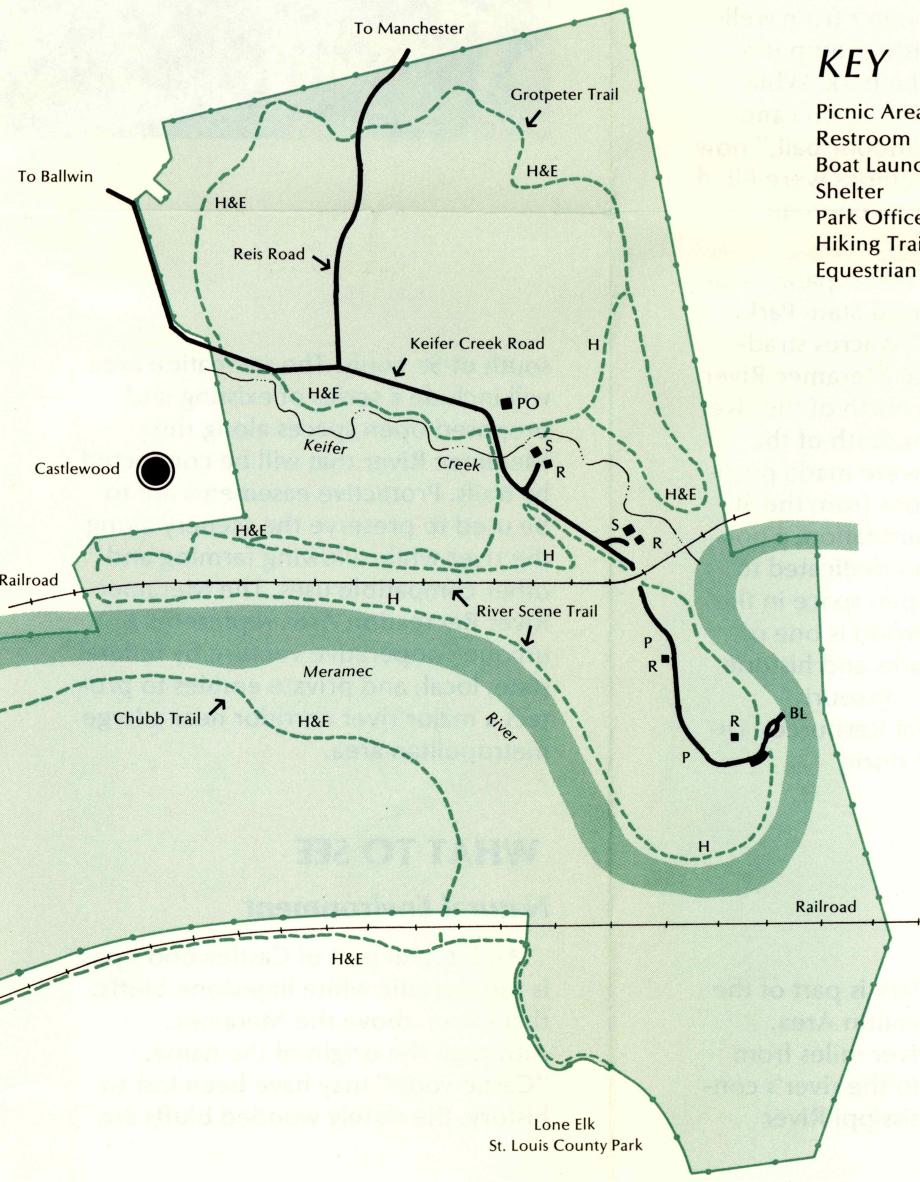
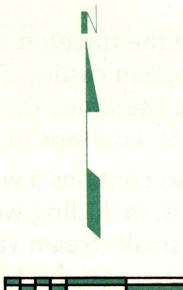
reminiscent of the turreted walls of medieval European castles. The bluffs and the scenic Meramec River valley first attracted St. Louisans to the area.

The park also contains a wide variety of natural habitats, including wooded dissected hills, a small stream valley, flood plain, gravel bars, and the Meramec River itself. A prime example of a rapidly vanishing natural feature - a native river bank forest known as Morschels Flood Plain Forest - is found within the park. The primary forest species include silver maple, box elder, black willow, white ash, and sycamore.

The uplands are forested with slippery elm, white oak, northern red oak, shagbark hickory, and redbud. River birch and the rare green hawthorn hug the banks of the river. Wildlife common to the area include cricket frogs, wild turkey, white-tailed deer, and river birds such as kingfishers and great blue herons.



## CASTLEWOOD STATE PARK



## WHAT TO DO

### Fishing and Canoeing

A parking lot and a concrete boat access ramp to the Meramec River have been installed at the east edge of that portion of the park north of the river, which now is open to the public. Fishermen can enjoy angling for bluegill, smallmouth bass, and catfish. The river access ramp provides an excellent "put in" or "take out" point for boats or canoes on the lower Meramec.

### Picnicking

Forty picnic sites and two shelters, ideal for family and group picnicking, are located in Castlewood State Park. Shelters may be reserved by contacting the park office in advance.

### Trails

Hikers and horseback riders can explore the park on more than 14 miles of trail. The three-mile Grotpeter Trail winds through the park's wooded uplands and can be accessed near the first picnic shelter. A one-mile hike also is possible on this trail. River Scene Trail is a three-mile loop trail that begins opposite the entrance road to the first picnic shelter. It ascends to the bluffs along the Meramec River, then goes down to the flood plain along the river's edge and back to the starting point. Chubb Trail is located on the south side of the river and may be accessed either from Lone Elk or West Tyson county parks. The seven-mile trail was developed by St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources through the cooperative effort of the Meramec River Recreation Association.